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SUBJECT: HUNGARY RELUCTANT TO JOIN IRENA CITING BUDGET  
PRESSURES; SUPPORTS GERMANY FOR HEADQUARTERS SITE

REF: SECSTATE 61286

¶1. (SBU) Miklos Poos, Deputy Director General for Environment, Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation at the Ministry of Transport, Telecommunications and Energy told us June 17 that Hungary has not yet made a decision to join the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). In response to reftel points, Poos said that the GOH has no substantive objections to IRENA. However, Hungary's current economic situation and budget constraints make it difficult to take on the added costs of joining a new organization at this time (which he estimated for Hungary would be 120,000 - 150,000 euros annually).

¶2. (SBU) In reference to the Headquarters question, Poos said that the GOH views IRENA as "an unambiguous German initiative" and, as such, prefers Germany as the site for IRENA's HQ. Additionally, he noted that if/when Hungary decides to join IRENA, the costs (transportation, lodging) of attending meetings in Germany would be 1/3 less than if the HQ were located in the UAE.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: The budget constraints facing GOH Ministries in the current economic crisis are significant. On June 16, Foreign Minister Balazs announced that Hungary will close twelve embassies and eight consulates worldwide as part of an effort to cut costs. Given this context, regardless of the substantive merits of IRENA, it is unlikely Hungary will join in the near future.  
Levine